

Where Are The Dead?

By David J. Stewart | September 2006 | Updated April 2015

2nd Corinthians 5:8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

This is a subject of much controversy, BUT there is NO controversy if you believe the Bible. It's as simple as this my friend—Today, the saved go to Heaven and the unsaved go to Hell. Our text verse plainly teaches that when a Christian's spirit leaves this mortal human body, we will be PRESENT WITH THE LORD. I have been working on this article for weeks, gathering information and pondering the subject, particularly *Paradise, aka, Abraham's bosom*, which I will cover in much detail in a moment. I think the Bible is fairly clear on the matter.



And let me say right now, because most articles written about the dead don't mention this—Hell is a literal place which burns with fire and brimstone for ever! Both Heaven and Hell are literal, physical, places. The Bible says that God and His Son sit upon thrones. A throne is a concrete item, not abstract. A throne can be touched and seen. Many people believe strange ideas about Heaven. It is a common belief that Heaven is not a literal place. I always capitalize the words Heaven and Hell, as is customary when naming proper places. Heaven and Hell are real places!!!

Only a Hellbound Christ-rejecter would deny the eternal punishment of the damned, in lieu of the abundance of supporting Scriptures (John 3:18; 2nd Thessalonians 1:8-9; Jude 1:7; Revelation 20:15). I've read several online articles concerning the dead, and am saddened that [many of them deny the existence of eternal punishment](#). Nothing could be further from the truth. The Word of God is very clear on this matter, and we would be wise to study God's Inspired Word rather than listen to the humanistic reasoning of foolish unsaved religious men.

I recently read a blasphemous religious article about the dead, which denies eternal punishment ...

Having demonstrated that neither the Bible nor reason offers the slightest support to the doctrine that eternal torment is the penalty for sin, we note the fact that the various church creeds, and confessions, and hymn-books, and theological treatises, are its only supports; and that under the increasing light of our day, and the consequent emancipation of reason, belief in this horrible, fiendish doctrine of the "dark ages" is fast dying out. [emphasis added]

SOURCE: [Where Are The Dead?](#)

Can you imagine ... a website called "BibleTruthKeys.com" which refers to Hell as a "fiendish doctrine of the dark ages"? What apostasy!!! The article quotes John 3:13 in an attempt to teach that there is no afterlife ... "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." The author of the article in question used up 3,045 lines of HTML code in an attempt to show that "hell" only means extinction (annihilation). What a nightmare! One thing that I love about the Truth of God's Word is that it doesn't take an article a mile long to defend It. You either believe the Bible or you don't—to those who believe, no explanation is necessary; to those who believe NOT, no explanation is possible. John 3:13 means what it says, for no man had ascended into Heaven in the Old Testament—they went to Paradise.

Below are definitions of the English word "HELL" and related words:

HELL — In common English usage, this term refers to present and future places of punishment for the wicked. The word properly translated "hell" in the New Testament has three different original Greek meanings: Tartarus, Hades and Gehenna . . .

- **TARTARUS** — This is the temporary holding place for some of the worst fallen angels. **Peter 2:4, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."** When a demon-possessed man was confronted by Jesus, the demons cried out for mercy, asking if He had come to TORMENT THEM before their time. **Matthew 8:29, "And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"** Demons go to Tartarus.
- **HADES** — This word is basically the New Testament counterpart of the Old Testament word, **Sheol**. It refers to the unseen world in general, but specifically to the abode of the unsaved **realm of the dead** between death and the final judgment at The Great White Throne Of Judgment (cf. Luke 16:23 and Revelation 20:11-15). Hades (hell) differs in that it is temporary while hell (Gehenna) is permanent. To put it plainly, the unsaved are waiting in jail (Hades) for their court appearance at The Great White Throne Of Judgment, upon which time they will be sentenced according their all their works, and then cast into prison (The Lake of Fire) forever to suffer with no hope of relief. (by the way, the abbreviation, cf. means, "compare with").

But Hades is much more than just a place of Torment. It is strongly believed by most Bible students and theologians that Hades is compartmentalized into two separate places: **Paradise** on one side, and the place of **Torment** on the other. The place of Paradise is commonly called **Abraham's bosom** (cf. Acts 16:19-31). OT saints were not permitted into Heaven yet, for Christ had not paid the price of redemption yet. Old Testament saints viewed Sheol as the place of the dead, or the Realm of the Dead. I've heard Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses, all attempt to deny the existence of a burning literal Hell, saying that Sheol merely means "the grave." The truth is

that Sheol refers to the grave and everything beyond it as well, Heaven or Hell. Scriptural proof is found in **Psalms 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."** In contend that if the wicked are turned into Hell, and Sheol (Hell) only means the grave, then where do the righteous go? Do the wicked and the righteous both go to the grave? If that's the case, then Psalms 9:17 makes no sense at all and sounds retarded. The very fact that the wicked go to Hell implies that the righteous go somewhere much nicer, which is, **Paradise!** So clearly, Sheol (Hades) means much more than mere death and burial in a grave. Sheol refers to the spiritual world beyond the grave as well.

- **SHEOL** — The general idea of this word is "the place of the dead" including the grave (cf. Numbers 16:30,33; Psalms 16:10), and the unseen place of those who have departed from this life, the place of departed spirits of both the righteous (Genesis 37:35) and the wicked (Proverbs 9:18). Sheol is the Realm of the spiritually living and dead. Sheol is strictly an Old Testament word, no longer used in the New Testament. It has been replaced with the Greek equivalent, Hades.
- **GEHENNA** —is the Greek: Geenna or Gehenna, a place in the *Valley of Hinnom* where human sacrifices had been offered, dead bodies discarded, and where continuous burning of rubbish made it an apt illustration of the eternal Lake of Fire (cf. Matthew 5:22). Revelation 20:14-15 teach that death and Hell (Hades) are cast into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna). No unsaved man is suffering in Gehenna at this time. Only after the Great White Throne of Judgement will all humanity be sentenced to eternal damnation. It will be a horrifying time of bitter tears, gnashing of teeth, inexplicable emotional trauma, and overwhelming shock. It won't be a pretty side to behold, as the wicked are cast into the Lake of Fire forever in their sins.

LAKE OF FIRE — Refers to the eternal state of the wicked who are forever separated from God and consigned to a special abode of suffering because of their rejection of Christ or their lack of the righteousness of Christ. It is equivalent to and identified with the second death in Revelation 20:14.

The satanic religious cults of Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, [Seventh Day Adventists \(SDA\)](#) and Christian Science all deny the reality of a literal place called Hell where Christ-rejecters will spend eternity. The Word of God plainly teaches and warns about the lake which burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8). Only a liberal who denies the inspiration of the Holy Bible can deny the existence of a literal Hell, where unrepentant sinners will spend eternity suffering. If God allows suffering in this world, then you can rest assure that He will also allow suffering in the next.

Where Did Old Testament Saints Go? — Much Controversy

First, before I give you my own exegesis on Abraham's Bosom, or Paradise, here is what numerous great men of God and Bible scholars believed about the matter of where Old Testament saints went when they died . . .

Evangelist John R. Rice Teaches OT Saints Went to Directly Heaven

Dr. John R. Rice (1895-1980) adamantly rejected the idea of a temporary holding place for Old Testament saints, or Paradise (aka, Abraham's Bosom). Dr. Rice believed that Heaven is Paradise . . .

“That great gulf between Hell and Paradise, or Heaven, is fixed, that is, it is permanent. NO ONE EVER CAN PASS FROM ONE TO THE OTHER! There is no limbo, no purgatory, no middle ground! Beyond this life there remains only an eternal Hell and an eternal Heaven, eternally separated!”

SOURCE: Dr. John R. Rice, *"HELL - What The Bible Says About It"* (booklet), pg. 10; copyright 1945, Sword Of The Lord Publishers.

Clearly, there is much disagreement on this issue of Abraham's Bosom amongst great Bible scholars and men of God.

Pastor J. Vernon McGee Teaches OT Saints Went to Paradise

I have always been a big fan and admirer of the man of God, Pastor J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988). Dr. McGee believed and taught the doctrine of Abraham's Bosom, which you can [freely hear for yourself in this link to MP3's](#) of the complete 'THRU THE BIBLE' 5-year series by Pastor McGee. Please listen to the MP3's for Luke 16:19-31 about the rich man and Lazarus.

John 3:13, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

Here is a wonderful explanation of John 3:13 by the great man of God, Pastor J. Vernon McGee ...

And now He says, "No man hath ascended up to heaven." That is the answer to those today who feel that Elijah and Enoch went to heaven when they were translated. I don't think so because up to this point the Lord Jesus says that no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. In other words, He is saying that He is the only One who can speak about heaven because He is the only One who has ascended up to heaven. Now it is true that there are

a host of folk who have gone to heaven after Christ, but in the Old Testament, when a saint of God died, one of God's own, he went to a place that is called Paradise or Abraham's Bosom—our Lord called it that (see Luke 16:22). It was not until after Christ died and ascended to heaven and led captivity captive that He took those who were in Paradise into the presence of God in heaven. Since then, for the child of God, it has always been "... absent from the body ... present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). But when Jesus was here, no other man had ascended to heaven.

SOURCE: *Thru The Bible*, with Pastor J. Vernon McGee.

I am inclined to agree with Dr. McGee's teachings concerning Paradise. For an excellent detailed explanation of Hell, please read the free online book [A Biblical Examination of Hell](#) by Pastor Max D. Younce.

Psalms 16:10, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Death is separation from God. Unsaved people are spiritually dead while they live, because they are separated from God. Now there is a second death, which is separation from God for all eternity. If you are not saved, you are already dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-2). If you die in your sins, in your spiritually dead condition, there is no place for you to go except Hell (Greek: *Hades*). You will die the second death, which is the Lake of Fire (Greek: *Gehenna*). Revelation 20:15 teaches that death and Hades will one day be cast into Gehenna (the Lake of Fire). **Revelation 20:14, "And death and hell (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire (Gehenna). This is the second death."**

This is a hotly debated issue in our churches today (and has been for centuries).

Luke 16 is perhaps the clearest Biblical account of what happens when a person dies. In Luke 16:22-23 we read, **"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments..."** So there you see where the idea of *Abraham's bosom* comes from. We learn from this fascinating passage of Scripture that the believer in Christ is escorted by angels at death to a place of peace. Tragically, we also learn that the unbeliever goes straight to a place of torment. "Abraham's bosom" is another term for the Old Testament place called *Paradise*. Hell (Hebrew: *Sheol*, Greek: *Hades*) is located inside the earth. It is believed by most theologians that Hades is compartmentalized into two distinct places: Paradise and Torment.

'Unger's Bible Dictionary' Teaches OT Saints Went to Paradise

Here's what Dr. Merrill Unger teaches about Abraham's Bosom . . .

"The Rich Man and Lazarus, 19-31.

This is not a parable, but an actual historical illustration, also aimed at the sneering, unbelieving, self-righteous, Pharisees. They boasted in their alleged law-keeping (cf. 15-17), and considered their wealth,

which they covetously garnered, as evidence of this. Jesus proved the fallacy of this reasoning. The rich man's great wealth was, on the contrary, not the evidence of divine favor, for he went to hell (Hades, Sheol, Intermediate abode of departed human spirits between death and the resurrection). Lazarus, a penniless beggar, nevertheless went to 'Abraham's bosom,' 22, i.e., paradise, where the souls of all OT saved went. He had no chance to make friends for himself by using 'the mammon of unrighteousness' (Jesus epithet for money), so as to welcome him to the 'everlasting habitations' (Heaven) (cf. 9). Yet he was there! And between him and the rich man was an impassable gulf, separating the lost from the saved. Let the covetous Pharisees take warning!"

SOURCE: *Unger's Bible Handbook*, Dr. Merrill F. Unger, pg. 531, Moody Press, copyright 1966.

Jesus assured the repentant thief on the cross with a promise, that they would both be in PARADISE that very day. Luke 23:43, **"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."** How can this refer to Heaven, since Christ had not yet died, been buried, raised up, nor sprinkled His liquid blood upon the heavenly Mercy Seat?

The Bible Plainly Teaches that Jesus' Soul Went to Hell (Paradise in Hades)

The Bible plainly says that Jesus' SOUL went to Hell (Hades). Acts 2:21, 25 and 27, **"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. ... For David speaketh concerning him ... Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."** The Bible teaches that God the Father would not leave Jesus' "SOUL IN HELL." This does not refer to Christ's physical body, but His soul. This strongly suggests that Jesus did in fact, i.e., His Spirit, descend into the lower parts of the earth (Ephesians 4:8-9) into Hell (Greek: Hades). Since the Bible doesn't teach that Christ burned in Torment for our sins, it is only logical to conclude that Christ's Holy Spirit went to the Paradise side of Hades. Furthermore, suffering in Hell wouldn't be Paradise. Jesus said that He was going to Paradise after the cross.

Since the Lord's blood had not yet been sprinkled to the heavenly Mercy Seat, He couldn't have delivered the saints from Paradise at that time. When Jesus told the thief on the cross that they would be in "Paradise" that very day, it could not have referred to Heaven, because Jesus' blood hadn't yet been applied to the Mercy Seat in Heaven. The PRICE for the Church is Jesus' liquid blood, and the PLACE is the heavenly Mercy Seat!!! So the OT saints waiting in Paradise had to wait awhile longer until the blood was applied to the Mercy Seat. After Jesus sprinkled His liquid blood onto the Mercy Seat, He returned to earth, which is when He appeared to the Apostles and told Thomas to touch His hands and reach into His side. Whereas the Lord told Mary not to touch Him, now it

was ok, because He had already ascended into Heaven with the blood sacrifice.

Christ's Work of Redemption Wasn't Finished On the Cross

I am wearied with today's preachers who say "it [redemption] was finished on the cross." NO, it was not finished on the cross! If you carefully read the Scriptures in John 19:28-30, we learn that it was the prophecies concerning Christ that were finished, with the last prophecy being fulfilled with Christ's words, "I THIRST." Jesus hadn't died yet, nor had He been buried, nor had He been resurrected. The *Gospel* is not merely that Jesus suffered on the cross; but rather, Christ DIED on the cross for our sins, He was BURIED and He was RESURRECTED the third day according to the Scriptures (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). So how could redemption have been finished when Christ said, "It is finished" in John 19:30? All of the prophecies concerning Christ were finished, not redemption.

Now having said that, if there were no Old Testament place of Paradise (in a two-sided, compartmentalized, place called Hades), then Luke 16:19-31 would have to be referring to Heaven and Hell. I have always thought of Hell as being DOWN in the lower parts of the earth, which is Biblical (Isaiah 14:9; Ezekiel 31:17). And I have always thought of Heaven as being UP, far away in the universe, which is also Biblical (Isaiah 55:8-9). It seems strange to me that there would be a great gulf fixed between Heaven and Hell, which would allow those in eternity to see each other. Yet, we read in **Luke 13:28**, **"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."** This Scripture seems to indicate that the dead suffering in the fires of Hell can indeed SEE the saints enjoying the Kingdom of God in Heaven. You decide!

I will tell you this, you won't find more commentary of this subject of Abraham's Bosom than what I am sharing with you. I was digging through all my Bible commentaries today to see what other preachers and scholars believed . . .

- Matthew Henry believes that Old Testament saints went directly to Heaven, and there was no temporary place called *Paradise*.
- *Unger's Bible Dictionary* teaches that the Old Testament saints went to Paradise, awaiting Christ's work of redemption.
- Dr. John R. Rice didn't believe in Paradise as a temporary waiting place; He taught that OT saints went directly to Heaven.
- Pastor Oliver B. Greene believes in Abraham's bosom, that is, *Paradise*.
- *Halley's Bible Handbook* says Paradise was transferred from Hades into Heaven when Christ ascended into Heaven.

Kindly, I would not be dogmatic on this issue, because many great men of God differ on this issue. Personally, I agree with the teaching of Abraham's bosom, based on Acts 2:27 that says Jesus' soul went to Hell (Hades). This is not a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith, although some Bible students would attempt to make it so. There is no debate over the fact that all departed born-again Christians are in Heaven today. The ongoing debate over where Old Testament saints went is not a critical matter. We know that they are all in Heaven now!

Also, if the redeemed in the Old Testament went directly to Heaven, then it makes no sense that Christ descended into the LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH (Ephesians 4:8-9). I do not believe that this refers to Christ being buried, because He was placed into a freshly

cut tombstone in the side of a Hill, not buried 6-feet-under as is done today in the United States. Furthermore, the Bible says that Christ DESCENDED. He was not carried downward by those burying Him. I think it is far fetched to interpret Christ “**descended into the lower parts of the earth**” in **Ephesians 4:9** as meaning His burial. This is what Matthew Henry believes, that is, Ephesians 4:9 refers to Christ's burial. This Scripture seems to teach that Christ went to Hades. There is no evidence whatsoever that Christ suffered or went to the place of Torment. Jesus plainly said on the cross that He was going that day to *Paradise*.

To clarify, the *Gospel* is defined as: Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He was buried and then He was resurrected after three days (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). Redemption was not finished on the cross, because Jesus hadn't been buried or raised up yet, which is part of the Gospel.

Jesus “Led Captivity Captive”

One of the most controversial passages of Scripture is found in Ephesians 4:8-10, concerning what the Bible means when Christ “led captivity captive.” It is commonly believed by Bible scholars that this refers to Old Testament saints (the redeemed) who were held captive in Paradise, awaiting the day when Christ would come to lead them out of captivity into Heaven . . .

Ephesians 4:7-11, “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.”

Ephesians 4:8 is a quote from Psalms 68:18 in the Old Testament. The Psalmist, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is prophesying concerning Christ . . .

Psalms 68:18, “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.”

[Please listen to Dr. McGee's commentary for Ephesians 4:8-10.](#) I agree with Dr. McGee's exegesis.

Here is some commentary from an interesting Christian website...

There is obviously a slight discrepancy between Psalm 68:18 and our text. The Psalm reads “received gifts for men,” but Paul writes “gave gifts unto men.” The liberal critic immediately sees a contradiction here, which he thinks argues against the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. But there is no problem because our Lord did both: He received and gave. On the one hand, the Son received them from the Father, and on the other, the Son gave them to the Church. As a victorious king would first receive the spoils of war and then distribute them to those who aided in the conquest, so the King of Kings received of His Father and distributed to His Church.

SOURCE: [Sola Scriptura Ministries](#)

Personally, although I do lean toward the theory of Abraham's bosom (Paradise), I do not think leading the captivity captive refers to the OT saints in Paradise. I agree with Matthew Henry, who states:

“Christ, when He ascended into Heaven, as a triumphant conqueror, *led captivity captive*. It is a phrase used in the Old Testament to signify a conquest over enemies, especially over such as formerly had led others captive. He conquered those who had conquered us; such as sin, the devil, and death. Indeed He triumphed over these on the cross; but the triumph was completed at the ascension, , when He became Lord over all.”

SOURCE: Matthew Henry's Commentary, Matthew Henry, pg. 1853; Zondervan Publishers.

Notice that the Bible says Christ *led captivity captive* when He “ascended up on high” (Ephesians 4:8), not when he descended down low. As I mentioned, I wouldn't argue the point, because truthfully, NO ONE can say with any certainty on this matter that they KNOW FOR SURE! We simply cannot say 100% that we know, although we may be 100% convinced that we do. The fact that many great Bible scholars disagree on this issue evidences that truth. Personally, I agree with Paradise. I think there is more evidence to support the theory of Abraham's bosom. By using Deductive Reasoning (deducing conclusions from known facts) to rightly divide the Scriptures, most Bible students come to the conclusion that there was a place called Paradise in the Old Testament.

Jesus Was Not Lowered Into the Earth When Buried

Some preachers call the doctrine of Paradise (or, Abraham's Bosom) a “strange doctrine,” but I have a problem with that, simply because there are too many passages of Scripture which logically lead the diligent Bible student to conclude that Old Testament saints didn't go to Heaven. [Please listen to Dr. McGee's commentary for Ephesians 4:8-10](#). I think the reference in Ephesians 4:9 to Christ descending INTO THE LOWER PARTS OF THE EARTH is very compelling evidence in favor of Paradise in Hades (Hell). The place of Torment is on the other side of Hades. Christ being carried into His tomb for burial by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea simply do not go along with Christ “DESCENDING,” nor His descending “INTO THE LOWER PARTS” of the earth. That sure sounds like much more than a mere burial. Christ was placed into a tomb, not lowered into the earth. I think this plainly evidences Paradise.

Again, we read in Ephesians 4:9, “**Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?**” When Jesus was buried into a tomb carved into a hillside, He was not lowered 6-feet-under (as is the method by which we bury most people in the United States today. So it wouldn't make sense to associate Christ's grave in a tomb with descending into the lower parts of the earth. I think this single passage of Scriptures provides much compelling evidence that the Lord descending into Hell (Hades), into Paradise. I believe that Jesus went into the center parts of the earth, to Hell (Hades) to deliver the saints from Paradise. However, I think they were brought to Heaven after Jesus' blood was applied to the Mercy Seat in Heaven.

So it is clear that Jesus' descending into the lower parts of the earth does NOT refer to His physical burial. So it can only refer to His soul. And that makes perfect sense in lieu of Acts 2:27, **"Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."** Jesus went to Hell (Hades). So now if you don't believe in the Paradise side of Hades, then you can only logically conclude that Jesus burned in the fires and torments of Hell for three days and nights. I do not believe that! Jesus suffered our punishment on the cross, when God the Father forsook His Son (God forsakes all men who die in their sins and go to Hell, and Jesus suffered our Hell on the cross). To blindly say that the saints all went to Heaven in the Old Testament is to ignore this important passage of Scripture. Jesus' Spirit went somewhere for three days, and He didn't burn in Hell.

No Man Ever Ascended into Heaven Prior to Jesus Christ

And please consider John 3:13, **"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."** According to John 3:13 no man ever ascended into Heaven, except Jesus Who came down from Heaven. How else could you explain this verse if taken literally, except to believe that no Old Testament saint ever went to Heaven? I certainly don't claim to understand it all, but this is what the Bible teaches, and it makes sense.



When Elijah was caught up into a whirlwind of fire, he went into the heavens (plural). The Bible doesn't say that he went to Heaven. There's the earth's atmosphere, the stars and solar systems, and then Heaven. We don't know all the details, period. The Bible does not conclusively say that Elijah went to Heaven. I had always been taught that Enoch and Elijah were the only two men that never saw death, and so they will likely be the two prophets coming during the 7-year Tribulation Period. However great that all sounds, I cannot prove any of it Biblically. If no man ever ascended into Heaven before Christ as John 3:13 teaches, then Enoch and Elijah couldn't have ascended physically into Heaven.

The reason why Jesus told Nicodemus that no man hath ascended into Heaven, except Him, was to let Nicodemus know that no man knew the truth any better than the Lord did. Christ came from Heaven, and is in Heaven (attesting to His deity), and Christ knows the will of the Father Who sent Him. Matthew Henry comments concerning John 3:13: **"It is not for us to send to Heaven for instructions; we must wait to receive what instructions Heaven will send to us."**

What Would Have Been the Purpose of Jesus Descending into The Earth?

If the Old Testament saints all went directly to Heaven, then what would have been the purpose for the Lord descending down into the lower parts of the earth for three days and three nights like Jonah? Matthew 12:40, **"For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."** Christ spending three days and three nights in the **"heart of the earth,"** again, sounds like very compelling evidence of the Abraham's bosom (Paradise) theory. I just don't see being put in a tomb for three days and nights a valid explanation for Christ being **"IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH."** The Greek word for "heart" here is *kardeeah*, literally referring to a person's physical heart; figuratively it refers to

the emotions or feelings; and by analogy the middle of something. It certainly seems logical to conclude that the Bible literally means Jesus went down into the lower parts of the earth, to the heart, or the middle, to the Paradise side of Hades (Hell).

There is not one bit of evidence to suggest that Jesus burned in the fires of Hell for any amount of time, so I totally reject that theory. Christ said on the cross that He was going that very day to Paradise. Jesus was placed into a newly cut graveside tomb, His body prepared according to Jewish custom and placed into the tomb by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

Those Bible students who call *Paradise* a strange doctrine, can only do so by shirking aside all of the compelling passages of Scripture which I have shared with you. If the Bible provided all the answers in plain site by casually reading, then God would not have commanded believers in 2nd Timothy 2:15 to “study.”

Abraham's Bosom is Not a Baptist Purgatory

Also, I don't agree that the teaching of *Abraham's bosom (Paradise)* as being a form of “Baptist purgatory.” That's simply not true. *Purgatory* is a manmade Roman Catholic doctrine that says if you die in your venial sins, then your loved ones can give money to the Catholic Church, perform Rosaries and pray their loved ones out of purgatory before it's too late. That is all satanic teaching!!! Of course, Catholicism says that if you die in your mortal sins (having failed to make it to confession), then you are doomed to Hellfire for all eternity. As you can imagine, Catholics are really big on Purgatory.

In sharp contrast to the Roman Catholic manmade tradition of Purgatory as a means of suffering for your sins for awhile, and then making it to Heaven eventually; we as Christians don't view Paradise (Abraham's Bosom) as a form of punishment, remorse or penance before a person can enter into Heaven. It is ridiculous to even call the teaching of Paradise a form of Purgatory, because it's not even in the same ballpark doctrinally. The doctrine of Abraham's Bosom is simply based upon the fact that until Christ's blood was sprinkled upon the heavenly Mercy Seat, no saints could enter into Heaven. And as you just read in John 3:13, before Christ no man ascended up into Heaven. That is a bold Scriptural truth!

Keep in mind that throughout the Old Testament, the saints were not allowed into God's presence in the Holy of Holies. The tabernacle high priest interceded between God and the people, through the offering of a spotless male lamb, which was killed and the blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat in the holy place. Once Christ raised up bodily and ascended into Heaven as our heavenly High Priest, interceding between God the Father and men (1st Timothy 2:5; Romans 8:34), we now have the right to boldly enter into God's very presence by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 4:15-16). Thank God for the blood of the Lamb!!!

My point here is that if Old Testament saints were not permitted into the presence of God in the holy place, then neither would it make sense that they be permitted to enter into Heaven where God lives.

I listened this week to a young sincere Baptist preacher, whom I am not criticizing in any way, but he said some statements that challenged me to go study some Scripture passages. The young whipper-snapper got me to thinking! One of the things that he said

was that Paradise wouldn't be much like Paradise if you could see people suffering over on the Torment side of Hades. In **Luke 16:26** we read about comforted Abraham telling the tormented rich man that there is, **“between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”**

Obviously, there is very much room open for speculation on the details of this place. If I were not burning in the flames, I would very much consider that safe place “Paradise.” Who are we to judge, contending that it wouldn't be Paradise if we could see the unsaved suffering. There are starving people all around this world that would consider the average food laden dumpster behind all of America's restaurants as “Paradise.” I certainly do not claim to know everything. I am careful on this matter not to be too dogmatic. I have tried to present evidence to you, so that you can form logical conclusions based upon Scriptural evidence. I strongly lean toward the Paradise theory.

Rightly Dividing (Dissecting) the Word of Truth

The young preacher also suggested that since the rich man “lifted up his eyes,” he must have been looking at Heaven (which is *UP* he said). **Luke 16:23, “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”** Can people in Hell see the saints in Heaven? I'll let you decide that one. In Hades (Hell), that they can see each other, because that's what the Bible tells us in Luke 16:23-26. Abraham and the rich man could see each other... AFAR OFF! There was an unsurpassable “GREAT GULF” fixed between them. That just doesn't sound like a chasm between Heaven and Hell to me, it sounds like a compartmentalized place called Hades.

God said in **2nd Timothy 2:15**, **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”** That plainly means that you cannot simply read the Holy Bible through from Genesis to Revelation and properly understand its great doctrinal truths. You cannot!!! You've got to cross-reference Scripture-with-Scripture, and dissect the passages, comparing and analyzing, praying and asking the Holy Spirit for wisdom to rightly divide it. Many people wrongly divide the Bible, teachings dangerous, bold and satanic heresies!!!

To Say OT Saints All Went To Heaven Ignores Many Scriptures

May I say to those of you who adamantly say that there is no place of Paradise, and all saved people in the Old Testament went directly to Heaven—you cannot just throw away Luke 16:19-31, Acts 2:27, John 3:13, Ephesians 4:8-9; Matthew 12:40 and other key passages. Jesus never called this story a parable in Luke 16:19-31. And unlike parables, where He always used unspecific names, in this story He uses the specify real names of Lazarus and Abraham. This cannot be a parable. Also, the Lord would be misleading us if the story He is telling was not a truthful picture of what happens when a person dies. I've been saved for over 35 years and I know the Lord well enough to know that He says what He means, and He means what He says! Amen!

Matthew 12:40 states, **“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the**

earth." Being buried in a tomb cut into a hillside doesn't sound like the heart of the earth to me. When Jesus died upon the cross, He descended into the lower parts of the earth into Paradise. This explains why we read in 1st Samuel 28:14 that the prophet Samuel came UP out of the earth.

More Scriptural Evidence in Support of 'Abraham's Bosom' Doctrine

Old Testament Saints Forbidden to Enter Holy of Holies

Take for example all the Old Testament sacrifices and the important work of the tabernacle high priest. I heard a preacher say from the Bible that Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and he said this proves that Old Testament saints went directly to Heaven just like in the New Testament. He made this claim to counter the teaching by some Bible scholars that Old Testament saints couldn't go to Heaven, because Jesus hadn't died on the cross yet. If this be true, as he says, then why were the sacrifice of goats and rams necessary at all? Why were the priestly duties required? Why did the high priest every year have to sprinkle the blood of a spotless, male, slain, lamb onto the mercy seat in the holy place? Clearly, everything was very different BEFORE Jesus died on the cross and applied His literal blood to the Mercy Seat in Heaven.



For this compelling reason, it would seem very logical to me (theologically), that the Old Testament saints could not enter into Heaven yet. Remember that Old Testament saints were absolutely prohibited and forbidden from entering into the innermost holy place. Only the approved high priest, and only with the blood of a young, spotless, male, lamb, could he enter. If anyone else entered, they died. If the high priest didn't bring the blood, God killed him on the spot. There was no matter any more important in the world, than the blood of that spotless slain lamb being sprinkled upon the mercy seat in the presence of God almighty. Once completed, the sins of the Hebrews were atoned for that year. Today, according to Hebrews 4:15-16, Christian believers have a right by the blood of Jesus to boldly enter into the Holy Place, into God's very presence, to ask for His grace and mercy through prayer.

As you can see, there are two schools of thought here. Many great men of God hold to one of these two views. Jack T. Chick and Oliver B. Greene believe in an Old Testament Paradise. I personally would not argue the issue with anyone, because it is NOT a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. Whether you believe Old Testament saints went to Heaven or Paradise, either way you still believe in eternal life. However, the doctrines of eternal punishment and eternal life ARE fundamental doctrines of the Biblical faith. If life were to cease at death, then there would be no reason for Jesus Christ to have died upon the cross for our sins. If there is no Hell, then there is no penalty for sin, so why get saved? As you can clearly see, the doctrines of eternal punishment for the wicked, and eternal life for the righteous are critically important to the Christian faith. Please read, [The Truth About Hell](#).

Most Bible students who hold to the Paradise view believe that Christ took all of the Old Testament saints to Heaven during the 3-days He was in the grave. Thus, whether you

believe in an Old Testament Paradise or not, we all believe that the Old Testament saints are in Heaven today with the Lord. Honestly, I have not found enough Biblical information to be dogmatic one way or the another. Nor do I think it is wise or fair for anyone to label those who teach Abraham's Bosom, as being a 'strange doctrine' or doing harm doctrinally. The simple reason why is because all the puzzles pieces of a temporary place called Paradise (or, Abraham's Bosom) for the Old Testament saints does fit into the Scriptures.

Please consider the following passage of Scripture . . .

Acts 2:21-27, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; **Jesus of Nazareth**, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: **Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell**, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

Acts 2:27 plainly teaches that Jesus went to Hell (Hades). He either went to burn in the fires of Hell, or He went to rescue the get in Paradise and welcome them home to Heaven. Now you can call this a strange doctrine if you want, but to say that Jesus burned in the fires of Hell would certainly be a strange (or new and different) doctrine. We know that the Lord's Spirit descended into the lower parts of the earth, into the heart. You cannot explain that if you believe the OT saints all went to Heaven. There must be a reconciliation between these facts. The teaching of Paradise (Hades) provides the answers. It makes sense. It fits doctrinally. To say that these are "strange doctrines" (as some preachers do), and claim that OT saints simply went directly to Heaven, leaves too many Scriptural loop holes.

The same is true of the Pretribulation Rapture teaching. Some preachers deny this doctrine also, calling it a "strange doctrine." The bottom line is that Jesus said in Mark 13:32-37 that NO MAN KNOWS the day, nor the hour, nor the time, when He will return. That one truth by itself proves a Pretribulation Rapture, because if the Lord returns at any other time afterwards, we will positively, absolutely, unquestionably, know exactly WHEN He is coming back. I don't know why this truth is so hard for many preachers to see in the Bible. Again, they casually read through the Bible and fail to see the doctrine, so they decide it doesn't exist. My friend, you must study, and study some more. Thankfully, we have tons of great and helpful books available online to help us study. See, PreceptAustin.org.

Where Do The Dead Go Today?

Unbelievers who die today still go to the place of Torment, in Hell (Hades). We know this because of what Revelation 20:12-13 teaches, "**And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were**

judged every man according to their works." So at The Great White Throne of Judgment, the DEAD will be delivered up from Hell. The word "hell" here in Revelation 20:13 is in fact the Greek, "Hades." The unsaved dead are presently awaiting judgment in Hades. They will be judged in Revelation 20:11-15, and then cast into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna) to be tormented eternally.



Born again believers today go straight to Heaven when they die. I believe Luke 16:22 clearly teaches that we will be escorted by angels to Heaven's gates. I believe we will be greeted by other saints as we arrive to Heaven. We read in Luke 15:10, **"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that**

repenteth." If it's not the angels rejoicing, then who is it? Christians of course! Personally, I think they all rejoice, but especially the saints. Hebrews 12:1 declares, **"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses..."** I believe that the same saints which rejoice in Heaven over one sinner that repents and gets saved, also jubilantly greet newcomers into Heaven's pearly gates.

It is clear from the Scriptures that the death of a Christian is a blessed event in Heaven, **"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints"** (Psalm 116:15). Why precious? Because the Lord gets to meet and speak with us face to face for the first time. If the death of a Christian is precious to the Lord, then you can rest assured that it is also precious to the inhabitants of Heaven. Death for the believer is actually a graduation from this old earthly life into a new celestial life with the Lord. The Apostle Paul speaks positively concerning the death of a believer in 1st Thessalonians 4:13, **"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."** The unbeliever dies and goes to Hell without hope--his family and friends have every reason to mourn and sorrow. However, the Christian goes to be with the Lord (2nd Corinthians 5:8), and that is something to have a celebration over.

The Lake of Fire

Lest you should have any doubts as to where the unsaved go, we read in 2nd Thessalonians 1:8 ... **"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord..."**

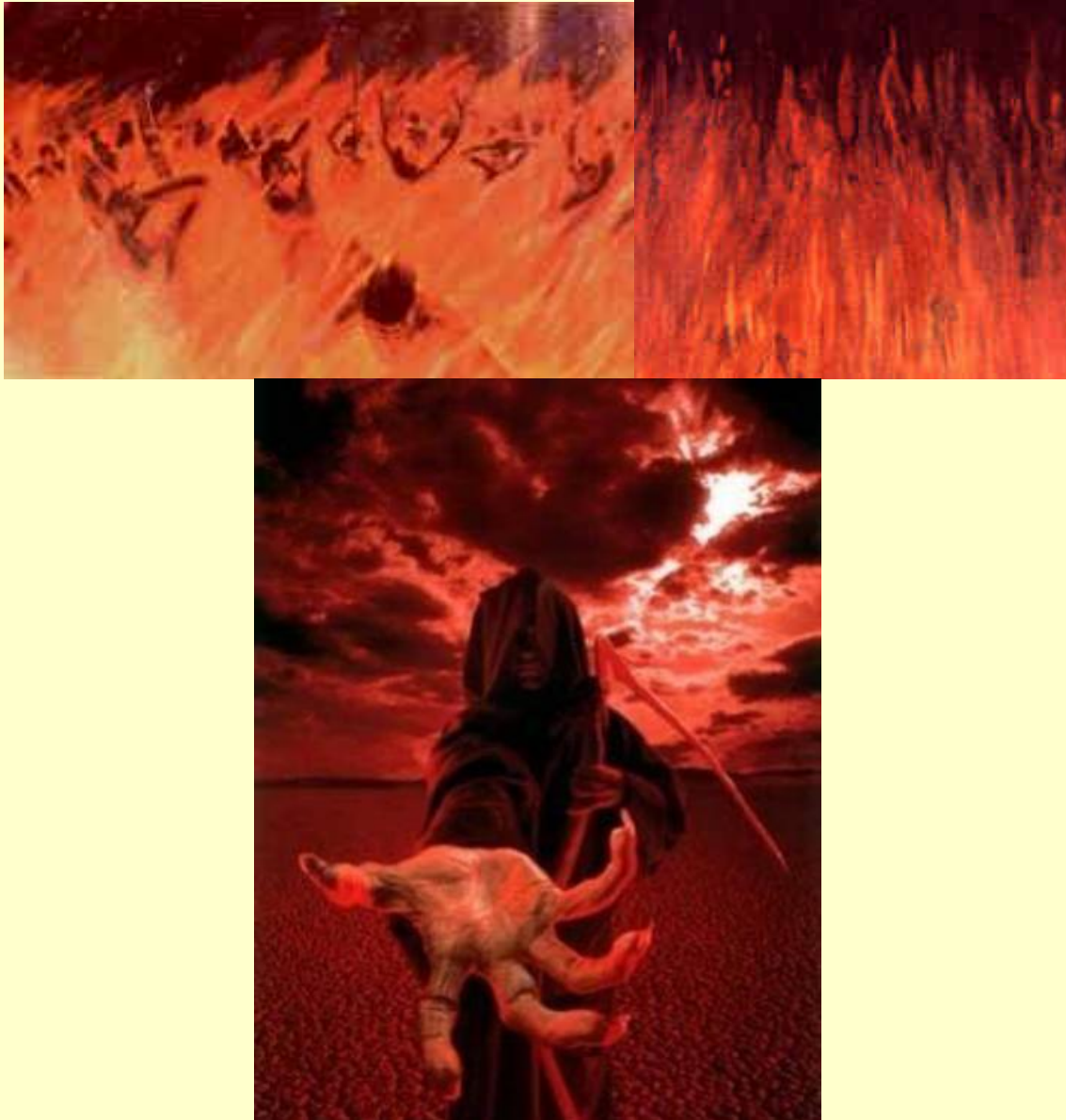
There you have it ... flaming fire, vengeance, punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord—who would want to go to such a horrible place? Yet, [most of the people](#) in this world are going to Hell when they die. 2nd Peter 3:9 tells us that God is NOT willing for ANY to perish, but for all to come to repentance. No one goes to Hell who doesn't choose to go there. God is a good and just God!





The Word of God plainly teaches that there is a [second death](#). There is NO mention in the Bible of a place called "Purgatory." In fact, purgatory is an [INVENTION](#) of the Catholic Church, first established by Gregory the Great in 593 A.D. If you hear someone teaching that the Bible doesn't teach eternal damnation and punishment, they are lying! Even the Old Testament, in Isaiah 66:24 WARNS of Hell, "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men

that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Neither shall their fire be quenched!!! "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2nd Thessalonians 2:12).



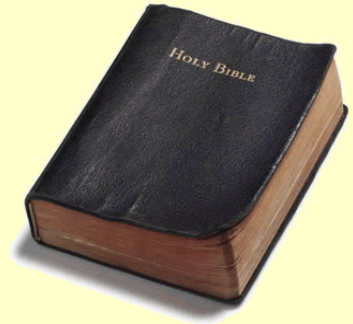
"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." —Revelation 20:14-15

END OF ARTICLE

The King James Bible IS Inspired!

"The Bible is not the inspired, inerrant and 100% historically true words of God. ... If we would destroy the Christian religion, we must

first of all destroy man's belief in the Bible." — Voltaire (French philosopher and former unbeliever 1694-1778 - He now knows better [in Hell])



As one liberal theologian pointed out in his review of Harold Lindsell's, *The Battle for the Bible*, the only real difference between the conservative and liberal positions on the Bible is that the conservatives say the Bible USED TO BE inspired and inerrant, whereas the liberal says it NEVER WAS inspired or inerrant. BOTH positions agree that the Bible IS NOT NOW inspired or inerrant.

As brother Daryl Coats so aptly says in his article *The Two Lies*: "If the Bible was inspired only in the original manuscripts, no one in the entire history of the world has ever had an inspired Bible. The original autographs of Job and the books of Moses had disappeared more than a thousand years before the first book of the New Testament was written, so no one has ever owned a complete Bible made up of the 'divine originals.' Nor, has anyone ever owned a complete New Testament made up of 'inspired originals,' because the originals were distributed among more than a dozen individuals and local churches."



"There is power in this Gospel message. Most people just don't know how to present it... The clarity of the Gospel is what makes it easy for them to believe."

—Pastor Yankee Arnold, a precious quote from the excellent MP3 sermon titled, ["WHY GRACE CAN SAVE THE WORST MAN!"](#)

"No one's ever saved by cheap grace, they're saved by priceless amazing grace! We have a miracle salvation provided and preserved by God Himself. Let's give out the Good News of this salvation, simply and faithfully for His glory. Salvation is not cheap. God sent His Son to pay for our sins. It wasn't cheap—very expensive—He just made it free."

And when you and I try to add one work to it, we cheapen it! That's when you cheapen it, when you think that it wasn't enough, I've got to add something to it!" —Pastor Yankee Arnold, a precious quote from the excellent MP3 sermon titled, "[CAUGHT BETWEEN GRACE AND WORKS!](#)" | [VIDEO](#) | [MORE HELPFUL SERMONS](#)

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